

SALMON Pre-Proposal Conference Questions
Holiday Inn Capitol City – Discovery Room II
September 26, 2008

Q1: For H3 will both of the sub-program elements be reviewed by the same panel or different panels?

A1: In terms of the peer review there will be separate panels. Some panelists may be on both panels.

Q2: In the AO it states that proposals must name the project manager. Should proposals name others, such as the systems operations engineer?

A2: It is not a requirement but you may want to list them as well.

Q3: In H1 it states that proposals are not required to comply with the SALMON AO. Does that mean that it should comply with ROSES?

A3: Yes

Q4: Is H2 decided on the science priorities or on the technical priorities?

A4: H2 is looking at science.

Q5: For the astrobiology portion, does this include just science investigations or future technology for science on other investigations?

A5: The focus is on science but if you are doing a technology development that focuses on science you can do that as well.

Q6: Can you comment on whether or not HQ is going to open up another AO in Earth Science? One in which we could bid instrumentation and partnerships?

A6: Earth Science is working on a Venture Class. We may use SALMON to solicit it.

Q7: For H2 is Earth considered planetary?

A7: No. H2 solicits investigations that address the goals of the planetary science program. The science objectives of planetary science are given in the NASA Science Plan, which is in the SALMON Program Library. Studying the Earth is not a science objective of the planetary science program.

Q8: Is there a 5 year limit for H2?

A8: No. Grants are limited to 5 years, but awards for H2 are likely to be contracts and thus not limited to 5 years.

Q9: Some appendices have “launch by” deadlines. H2 has a “decision needed by date”. Is there any notional deadline for launch for H2?

A9: No. However the “decision needed by date” is important. Proposers need to be proposing to something that is in the near future. We do not want you to propose to missions too far in the future, unless you can give a clear reason as to why you are required to propose so early.

Q10: Is there any preference for missions launching 2010, 2011, 2012, etc?

A10: No, there is not. We expect you to drum up the ideas and determine what you think is beneficial to NASA whether it be in 2010, 2011, or any other year.

Q11: In H2 is NASA looking for science merit or technology; I thought the answer was science merit but you are sliding towards technology. Which is it?

A11: H2 is looking at science merit.

Q12: For H2, should the cost in the proposal cover page online only be for the first 5 years even if we have more than 5 years for archiving and etc?

A12: There are no online budget pages for H2 or any of the SALMON PEAs (H2, H3, H5). The online budget pages are only for the ROSES PEAs (H1, H4).

Q13: Could you expand on the relationship between being the primary payload and secondary payload for H2? Isn't the science being collected on the payload related to the primary payload of the mission? Can you expand on the difference?

A13: H2 assumes you are part of the host mission; you are not a secondary payload, you are a critical part of the primary payload. We will evaluate the quality of your investigation and if your host wants it. We are not going to evaluate the whole mission proposed by the host but only your part of the science investigation.

Q14: Is the 25% cost reserve still expected through Phase E?

A14: We expect you to keep reserve through Phase E and F, but the 25% requirement is not imposed there. We expect you to tell us what you need in Phase E and F and explain why, because it will differ enormously from proposal to proposal.

Q15: For H1, do we still have to have Co-Is submit traditional letters of commitment if we are submitting through NSPIRES?

A15: Yes, statements of commitment are still required for ROSES submissions. **NOTE – This answer was answered wrong at the pre-proposal conference.**

Q16: What is the lead time for getting the cover page complete in order to have your institution submit the cover page? A lot of Co-Is are on travel so they may not get the notification from NSPIRES and might not get back until a week or day or two before the proposal is due. What do we do in that case?

A16: It is the PI's responsibility to get the Co-Is to accept their role in NSPIRES. If that is the case then you may not get your proposal submitted on time, so it is really the PIs role to double check.

Q17: Can you expand on the dotted line in your Proposal Evaluation Process flow chart? (the line connecting TMC review to science review with a one-way arrow)

A17: These are independent review panels that don't affect each other. The TMC panel is made up of technical, management, and cost reviewers and the science panelists evaluate the science merit and science implementation merit. However, sometimes there are issues on the implementation that the TMC panel may not be sure about and want to give the questions over to the scientists to evaluate or answer.

Q18: Those questions don't flow back in the other direction then?

A18: That is correct. If the science panel believes that there is a major weakness that the TMC panel missed then the evaluation managers can gather the TMC evaluators to make a decision on that, but usually it is a matter of just having the scientists look at the issue to see if the issue identified by the TMC panel is actually an issue.

Q19: When you are debriefing do you tell the PI teams what Category they fall in?

A19: Yes, they are told. Just so you know, about half of the proposals are rated Category IV, so if you are rated that way do not think that it is uncommon. About a quarter to a third are Category I; about a sixth to a quarter are Category II and a small fraction, a handful, are Category III.

Q20: In the appendix on orbital debris, do we just have to expand on our piece or on the whole mission's orbital debris?

A20: You have to discuss the whole mission. NASA requires anything that we participate in to meet the orbital debris requirements.

Q21: PIs should then interface with the host mission to make sure they are meeting the requirements for orbital debris?

A21: Yes. Hopefully this issue will not be unfamiliar to the host mission and they will be able to answer it quickly.

Q22: To make a clarification on orbital debris. If the host mission has created an orbital debris plan that meets the NASA requirements, is it adequate to refer to that or should we write our own plan?

A22: You should synopsise the plan that your host mission has written to your mission and put it in your proposal.

Q23: In the past performance section of my proposal, do I need a point of contact for what I am claiming? And if I claim something, are my bosses good enough points of contact or do I need to have a customer point of contact to verify?

A23: There is no requirement in this AO on how you provide that information.

Q24: Are the science merit and science implementation merit reviewed by the same people or different people?

A24: They are reviewed on the science panel by the same people.

Q25: Should we repeat information in the different sections then?

A25: There is not a requirement to repeat information. You should refer to the information though.

Q26: So the proposal might be read out of order then?

A26: We cannot speak to how the reviewer reads your proposal; it's how the reviewer chooses to read it.

Q27: So the TMC reads only TMC parts and the scientists only read the science?

A27: All reviewers read the whole proposal. However, they are only reviewing the proposals against their piece of evaluation criteria.

Q28: I heard earlier that you don't do a cost evaluation, now you are saying that you do complete a cost evaluation, which is the case?

A28: We don't complete a "should cost" evaluation; we validate your mission costs based on what you proposed. We do a reconciliation to try and understand why what we find might differ from what you proposed. The basis of estimate is critical.

Q29: What do you consider a leveling of the difference between costs? For example, I run a model and then you run one and it is different. What do you consider within the margin of error if our numbers are different?

A29: We do have error bars. On Step 1 proposals and in this solicitation it is a 20% margin of error. If you are within 20% of our numbers we give you the benefit. Recall that the evaluation is not just about the models.

Q30: You mentioned earlier that TMC is self contained. For mass margins, different agencies such as ESA may have different mass margin requirements than NASA. How will NASA know the difference if the reviewers are all used to NASA mass margin guidelines and are unable to contact others outside the review panel? If there is a 30% mass margin requirement do I have to carry the whole margin or can the host team carry some of that margin?

A30: First, there are not any requirements in this AO that you have to carry a 30% mass margin. You have to work with your host project management organization to figure out what mass margin you need to carry. If you are not proposing what our evaluation team would consider a high enough mass margin because your host mission is carrying the rest of the margin for you, then you need to explain that in your proposal. For example, if you tell us that you only have a 10% mass margin, we may not consider that enough, but if the whole mission has a 30% margin, then you should identify that the host mission organization is carrying the other 20% mass margin. You should explain the reasons as to why you are holding that mass margin. There is no hard and fast rule on how the evaluators should evaluate mass margin, but they are coming from their own experience base, so you should explain the reasons behind your margins if they are different than the typical NASA mass margins.

Q31: For H3, for the Accommodation study, can someone put a similar reference document on the Web to this one on H2? To describe the process.

A31: We will take a look at this and see if it would be possible to create something like it.

Q32: So everything we do needs ITAR?

A32: If you have a foreign partner...

Q33: Data only?

A33: Receiving science data is OK. Providing ground data is also OK – that is not on the list because it is not space-based. **Keep in mind that in Category XV of the ITAR controls**

ground control stations for telemetry and, tracking and control of spacecraft and satellites (ITAR 121 Category XV - <http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/>)

Q34: If I don't have an official export technical design report, but I wrote a paper on it and presented it in public it is considered official?

A34: ITAR requires a TAA even if the information is in the public domain. **Both the ITAR and EAR specify what putting something in the public domain means. Please review ITAR 120.11. The ITAR requires a TAA even when all the information is in the public domain. A TAA (ITAR 120.22) is an agreement for the performance of a defense service or the disclosure of technical data and assembly of defense articles is included, provided production rights or manufacturing know-how are not conveyed.**

Q35: How far can a team go in talking to a foreign organization before the discussion would be considered illegal according to Export Control laws?

A35: Performance data and basic descriptions are fine, but you can't tell them specifically how you are designing your product or give them a blue print of what you are making. **Discussions about purpose of the cooperation, how you will cooperate, who will do what, and the parties to be involved are needed to plan for submitting a TAA to the Department of State.**

Q36: So you can have a vague high level discussion?

A36: Yes a basic high level discussion is fine.

Q37: Do we need the TAA agreements in place before the proposal is submitted?

A37: No there is no requirement to have a TAA in place before a proposal is submitted, However getting a TAA takes time **(about 45-60 days)**. Many PIs put in for the TAA long before they get a contract. **See <http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/licensing/agreement.html>.**

Q38: Even if there is a 20% chance we will be selected, we can still apply for it?

A38: Yes. You can do that. The State Department has an outline on how to complete a TAA (<http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/licensing/agreement.html>).

Q39: PEA H1 (USPI) does not mention the requirement to demonstrate compliance with export controlled information and ITAR regulations. Is this required if proposal is from a NASA center (e.g., JPL).

A39: This part is submitted through NSPIRES and falls under the ROSES solicitation. These requirements are the same with NASA centers as they are for universities. The requirement for managing export controlled data (ITAR) may be found in the Guidebook for Proposers is clear that ITAR matters. Upon submitting a proposal to ROSES, you must answer a question about whether the proposal contains ITAR controlled information. This is the case regardless of where the PI works. **NOTE – this response has been clarified from the answer given at the pre-proposal conference.**

Q40: If you are proposing to H3 on the FSB part and you are using a lab in which a student from a proscribed country works in the lab, is that an issue?

A40: Yes, that could be an issue and you should check on it. The university **could** need a TAA to teach spacecraft design to these students **and should consult with the Department of State**.

Q41: In the appendices it states that we need to identify what we are doing in Export Control. Is it adequate to say that we understand export control or do we need an explicit detailed section on that?

A41: You do not need a detailed instruction on what you will do. You do need to state that you understand export control and the steps you are taking, but it does not need to be detailed. It is like a description in a Step 1 proposal.

Q42: This is only a Step 1 proposal, so do we need it to be detailed since there is not a Step 2?

A42: No, your answers for Export Control should be similar to what you would submit if this were a Step 1 of a Step 2 process proposal.

Q43: Who do we talk to in order to put in place international agreements?

A43: They do not need to be put in place prior to proposal submission. The agreements are only put in place if you are selected. However, you need to identify the Co-I or tell us what type of international agreement you may need, whether it be for a Co-I or working with a foreign organization.

Q44: International agreements come into play after the proposal is selected?

A44: Yes, that is correct.

Q45: Is a Co-I that is a foreign national working in the U.S. funded directly then?

A45: We don't fund individuals we fund institutions. We will only fund U.S. Organizations. The organization chooses which individuals to fund.

Comment: On the FSB portion of H3, you need to know that these Satellites are non-returnable, so you will be unable to get back sample returns.

Q46: Do you have a feeling about how clear we are in working with Russia?

A46: Please submit that question to us via email. We can say that we are already collaborating on science with Russia but there are a lot of specifics that you need to be aware of, so you should submit this question so the international agreement folks can give you a proper answer.

Q47: If for H2 you have \$35M and two proposals are selectable but the first one uses most of the \$35M, is there any chance that you might later choose that second proposal?

A47: The government can choose what it wants. We will most likely send that one proposal a rejection letter, but if we suddenly find more money and choose to fund it later we typically can. Generally, a proposal is typically valid for a year after submission without having to be re-evaluated. We would ask you if the proposal you submitted was still valid.

Q48: If you are proposing to be a USPI on a foreign mission, who do we need to get a letter of acceptance from, say for example if it is an ESA mission? Is that requirement satisfied by a letter from ESA or someone else?

A48: Whoever has the authority to add you as the USPI on the team.

Q49: Under the requirements section on archival of materials, if we are proposing to work with a foreign organization, are we only required to archive our data instead of the whole mission's data? Or do we need to archive that data as well?

A49: The more you archive the more positive points you get in the evaluation.

Q50: But if the mission is from a foreign host and they are archiving the rest of their data in their country, do we need archive that also. For example if there is a camera on a foreign mission and we are only studying 10 of the 300 pictures the camera takes do we only need to archive the 10 or all 300 pictures if the foreign team is already archiving those 300?

A50: You only have to archive the data you are looking at for the investigation your propose. Refer to Section 2.2.4 in the H1 description.

Q51: In the AO there is no estimation on the number of foldouts that are allowed. Is there a restriction or are we allowed to have as many as we'd like?

A51: That answer should be in Appendix B, however there is no requirement on how many foldouts you are required to have or not have.

Q52: So we're not going to irritate the reviewers....

A52: Remember who the audience is – the reviewers are your audience and some will read the paper version and some will look at the CD.

Q53: Appendix B doesn't say how many foldouts you have to have though?

A53: Yes, that is correct. There is no restriction on the number of foldouts.

Q54: Can I have some direction about what the evaluation of the accommodation study will look at versus what the TMC evaluates?

A54: Yes, we will have an answer to that and we will post it.